

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. An apparatus for applying the heat-transfer label of a heat-transfer label assembly onto an object, said apparatus comprising:

a. a decorating unit for applying the heat-transfer label onto the object during a period of decoration, said decorating unit comprising a heated contact plate which is disposed to continuously urge the heat-transfer label into contact with the object throughout the period of decoration; and

b. an conveying mechanism for advancing and supporting the object throughout the period of decoration.

2. The apparatus of claim 1 wherein the heated contact plate is generally flat.

3. The apparatus of claim 1 wherein the heated contact plate is adapted to pivot so as to continuously urge the heat-transfer label into contact with the object throughout the period of decoration.

4. The apparatus of claim 3 wherein the contact plate comprises a heating plate and a rubber layer mounted on said heating plate.

5. The apparatus of claim 4 wherein the rubber layer which is constructed of an 80 durometer silicone.

6. The apparatus of claim 5 wherein the heated contact plate includes a covering mounted on the rubber layer, the covering being constructed of a 0.10 inches thick layer of TEFLON fiberglass cloth.

7. The apparatus of claim 6 wherein said heated contact plate is heated to a temperature of approximately 450 degrees Fahrenheit.

8. The apparatus of claim 7 wherein said decorating unit further comprises an elongated heated preheater for heating the heat-transfer label before the period of decoration.

9. The apparatus of claim 8 wherein said conveying mechanism is in the form of a turntable which is continuously rotationally driven about a vertical axis.

10. The apparatus of claim 9 further comprising a plurality of support disks mounted on conveying mechanism, each of said plurality of support disks being sized and shaped to support an object.

11. The apparatus of claim 10 wherein each of the plurality of support disks is adapted to rotate relative to said conveying mechanism.

12. A decorating unit for applying the heat-transfer label of a heat-transfer label assembly onto an object during a period of decoration, said decorating unit comprising:

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- a. a preheater for heating the heat-transfer label assembly before the period of decoration;
 - b. a heated contact plate which is disposed to continuously urge the heat-transfer label into contact with the object throughout the period of decoration; and
 - c. a transport assembly for advancing the heat-transfer label assembly from said preheater to said heated contact plate.

13. The decorating unit of claim 12 wherein said heated contact plate is generally flat.

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14. The decorating unit of claim 12 wherein said heated contact plate is adapted to pivot so as to continuously urge the heat-transfer label into contact with the object throughout the period of decoration.

15. The decorating unit of claim 14 wherein said heated contact plate includes a rubber layer which is constructed of an 80 durometer silicone.

16. The decorating unit of claim 15 wherein said heated contact plate includes a covering mounted on the rubber layer, the covering being constructed of a 0.10 inches thick layer of TEFLON fiberglass cloth.

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17. The decorating unit of claim 16 wherein said heated contact plate is heated to a temperature of approximately 450 degrees Fahrenheit.

18. An apparatus for applying the transfer label of a transfer label assembly onto an object, said apparatus comprising:

a. a decorating unit for applying the label onto the object during a period of decoration, said decorating unit comprising a contact plate which is disposed to continuously urge the transfer label into contact with the object throughout the period of decoration; and

b. an conveying mechanism for advancing and supporting the object throughout the period of decoration.

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